

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An absorbent garment comprising:
 - a chassis; and
 - an absorbent element fixedly connected to said chassis at a first location
- 5 and having a first portion detachably connected to at least one of a second portion of said absorbent element and said chassis at a second location, said absorbent element comprising an absorbent material expandable from at least a first condition to a second condition, wherein said first portion of said absorbent element detaches from said at least one of said second portion of said absorbent element and said chassis at at least a portion of said second location when said absorbent material expands to said second condition.
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2. The invention of claim 1 wherein said absorbent element comprises a cover sheet fixedly connected to said chassis at said first location, wherein said cover sheet comprises said first and second portions of said absorbent element, wherein said first portion of said cover sheet is detachably connected to said at least one of said second portion of said cover sheet and said chassis at said second location, wherein said cover sheet supports said absorbent material.
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- 20 3. The invention of claim 1 wherein said absorbent element is fixedly connected to said chassis at said first location with a primary bond, and wherein said first portion of said absorbent element is detachably connected to said at least one of said second portion of said absorbent element and said chassis at said second location with a secondary bond, wherein said secondary bond is weaker than said primary bond.
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4. The invention of claim 1 wherein said absorbent material has a first and second side, and further comprising a topsheet disposed adjacent said first side of said absorbent material.

5. The invention of claim 1 wherein said second location is positioned laterally outboard from said first location.

6. The invention of claim 1 wherein said absorbent element has a longitudinal extent and wherein said first location extends longitudinally along at least a portion of said absorbent element.

7. The invention of claim 6 wherein said second location extends longitudinally along at least a portion of said absorbent element in a parallel relationship with said first location.

8. The invention of claim 1 wherein said absorbent element has a longitudinal extent, wherein said first location comprises a pair of laterally spaced, parallel and longitudinally extending primary locations, and wherein said second location comprises a pair of laterally spaced secondary locations.

9. The invention of claim 1 wherein said second location comprises a bonding region defined by a longitudinally extending length and a laterally extending width.

10. The invention of claim 6 wherein said absorbent element comprises opposite ends, wherein at least one of said ends is fixedly connected to said chassis.

11. The invention of claim 10 wherein said fixed connection between said at least one of said ends of said absorbent element and said chassis are spaced apart from said longitudinally extending first location.

12. The invention of claim 1 wherein said absorbent material comprises a first fold having opposite side edges and a second and third fold attached to said

opposite side edges of said first fold respectively and extending inwardly in an overlying relationship with said first fold.

13. The invention of claim 1 wherein said absorbent material comprises a
5 plurality of disconnected layers.

14. The invention of claim 2 wherein said absorbent material is not attached to said cover sheet.

10 15. The invention of claim 1 wherein said chassis comprises a top sheet and an extensible outer cover.

16. The invention of claim 1 wherein said chassis comprises a front and back panel, and wherein said absorbent element connects said front and back
15 panels.

17. The invention of claim 16 wherein said absorbent element is connected to a bodyside surface of said front and back panels.

20 18. The invention of claim 4 wherein said topsheet is interfolded with said absorbent material.

19. The invention of claim 2 wherein said first portion of said cover sheet is detachably connected to said second portion of said cover sheet.

25 20. The invention of claim 19 wherein said first and second portions of said cover sheet comprise overlying folds of said cover sheet.

21. The invention of claim 2 wherein said first portion of said cover sheet is
30 detachably connected to said chassis.

22. A method of absorbing exudates excreted from a user with an absorbent garment comprising:

providing a chassis and an absorbent element connected to said chassis at a first location, said absorbent element having a first portion detachably

5 connected to at least one of a second portion of said absorbent element and said chassis at a second location, wherein said absorbent element comprises an absorbent material;

securing said chassis to a body of a user;

insulting said absorbent material with said exudates and thereby causing
10 said absorbent material to expand; and

disconnecting said first portion of said absorbent element from said at least one of said second portion of said absorbent element and said chassis at at least a portion of said second location as said absorbent material expands while maintaining said connection between said absorbent element and said chassis at
15 said first location.

23. The invention of claim 22 wherein said absorbent element comprises a cover sheet fixedly connected to said chassis at said first location and wherein said cover sheet comprises said first and second portions of said absorbent

20 element, wherein said first portion of said cover sheet is detachably connected to at least one of said second portion of said cover sheet and said chassis at said second location, wherein said cover sheet supports said absorbent material.

24. The invention of claim 22 wherein said absorbent element is fixedly

25 connected to said chassis at said first location with a primary bond, and wherein said first portion of said absorbent material is detachably connected to at least one of said second portion of said absorbent element and said chassis at said second location with a secondary bond, wherein said secondary bond is weaker than said primary bond.

25. The invention of claim 22 wherein said absorbent material has a first and second side, and further comprising a topsheet disposed adjacent said first side of said absorbent material.

5 26. The invention of claim 22 wherein said absorbent element has a longitudinal extent and wherein said second location is positioned laterally outboard from said first location.

10 27. The invention of claim 26 wherein said first location extends longitudinally along at least a portion of said absorbent element.

15 28. The invention of claim 27 wherein said second location extends longitudinally along at least a portion of said absorbent element in a parallel relationship with said first location.

20 29. The invention of claim 22 wherein said absorbent element has a longitudinal extent, wherein said first location comprises a pair of laterally spaced, parallel and longitudinally extending first locations, and wherein said second location comprises a pair of laterally spaced secondary locations.

25 30. The invention of claim 23 wherein said first portion of said cover sheet is detachably connected to said second portion of said cover sheet.

32. A method of assembling an absorbent garment comprising:
providing a chassis;
providing an absorbent element comprising an absorbent material;
bonding said absorbent element with a primary bond to said chassis at at least one primary bond region; and

bonding a first portion of said absorbent element to at least one of a second portion of said absorbent element and said chassis with a secondary bond at at least one secondary bond region, wherein said secondary bond is weaker than said primary bond.

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33. The invention of claim 32 wherein said first and second bond regions are laterally spaced.

34. The invention of claim 32 wherein said primary bond region comprises a
10 pair of laterally spaced, parallel and longitudinally extending primary bond
regions, and wherein said secondary bond region comprises a pair of laterally
spaced secondary bond regions.

35. The invention of claim 32 wherein said absorbent material comprises a
15 first fold having opposite side edges and a second and third fold attached to said
opposite side edges of said first fold respectively and extending inwardly in an
overlying relationship with said first fold.

36. The invention of claim 32 further comprising disposing a topsheet
20 adjacent one side of said absorbent element.

37. The invention of claim 32 wherein said chassis comprises spaced apart
front and back panels, and further comprising bonding said absorbent element
to each of said front and back panels with said primary bond.

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38. The invention of claim 32 wherein said absorbent element further
comprises a cover sheet, wherein said cover sheet is bonded to said chassis with
said primary bond at said primary bond region, wherein said cover sheet
comprises said first and second portions of said absorbent element, wherein said
30 first portion of is bonded to said second portion of said cover sheet with said
secondary bond at said secondary bond region.

39. The invention of claim 32 wherein said absorbent element further comprises a cover sheet, wherein said cover sheet is bonded to said chassis with said primary bond at said primary bond region, and wherein said cover sheet
5 comprises said first and second portions of said absorbent element, wherein said first portion of is bonded to said chassis with said secondary bond at said secondary bond region.

40. An absorbent garment comprising:
10 a chassis having an opening formed therein and comprising an outer surface; and

an absorbent element comprising an extensible cover sheet and an absorbent material supported by said cover sheet, wherein said extensible cover sheet is attached to said outer surface of said chassis on opposite sides of said
15 opening such that said absorbent material covers said opening, wherein said cover sheet is extensible between at least a first and second position, and wherein said absorbent element comprises an absorbent material expandable from at least a first condition to a second condition, wherein said cover extends away from said chassis to said second position when said absorbent material
20 expands to said second condition.

41. The invention of claim 40 wherein said cover sheet has a first portion detachably connected to at least one of a second portion of said cover sheet and said chassis.
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42. The invention of claim 41 wherein said cover sheet is connected to said chassis with a primary bond and wherein said first portion of said cover sheet is detachably connected to at least one of said second portion of said cover sheet and said chassis with a secondary bond, wherein said primary bond is stronger
30 than said secondary bond.

43. An absorbent garment comprising:
a chassis having an outer, garment side surface; and
an absorbent element having opposite side edges and a bodyside surface,
wherein said bodyside surface of said absorbent element is connected to said
outer surface of said chassis along a first location spaced laterally inward from
said opposite side edges.

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44. The invention of claim 43 wherein said first location comprises a pair of
first locations spaced laterally inward from each of said opposite side edges
10 respectively.

45. The invention of claim 43 wherein a first portion of said bodyside
surface of said absorbent element is further connected to at least one of a second
portion of said absorbent element and said outer surface of said chassis at a
15 second location positioned between said first location and one of said opposite
side edges of said absorbent element, wherein said absorbent element comprises
an absorbent material expandable from at least a first condition to a second
condition, and wherein said first portion of said absorbent element detaches
from said at least one of said second portion and said chassis at at least a
20 portion of said second location when said absorbent material expands to said
second condition.

46. An absorbent garment comprising:
a reusable chassis having an outer surface; and
25 a disposable absorbent element detachably connected to said outer
surface of said chassis.

47. An absorbent garment system comprising:
a reusable chassis having an outer surface; and
30 a plurality of disposable absorbent elements capable of being detachably
connected to said outer surface of said chassis.

48. A method of providing absorbent protection to a user:
 - securing a reusable chassis to a body of the user, wherein said chassis has an outer surface, and wherein a disposable absorbent element is detachably connected to said outer surface of said chassis;
 - insulting said absorbent element with bodily exudates;
 - detaching said insulted disposable absorbent element from said outer surface of said chassis; and
 - attaching a second disposable absorbent element to said outer surface of said chassis.

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